

**BARRIER TO WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN
NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOUTHERN NIGERIA AND
NORTHERN NIGERIA.**

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**BEING A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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CERTIFICATION

We, certify that this research project was carried out by OSAYANDE GODSTIME the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria. It is adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (BSc.) degree in Political Science.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God Almighty for His grace, guidance, and protection throughout my academic journey. It is also dedicated to my parents, family members, and all those who have supported me morally, financially, and emotionally in the pursuit of my education.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the barriers to women's participation in electoral processes in Nigeria, comparing southern and northern regions. Despite progress, women's representation in politics remains low, with regional disparities. The study identifies cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional obstacles hindering women's involvement. Key findings include limited access to education and economic resources, cultural norms, and inadequate policy implementation. The study recommends targeted interventions, policy reforms, and regional-specific strategies to increase women's participation in Nigerian politics.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Women's participation in the electoral process is an essential indicator of democratic development and inclusive governance. In every society, the full involvement of women in politics ensures that decisions reflect the needs, priorities, and experiences of all citizens. However, despite global advocacy for gender equality and political inclusion, women across the world—particularly in developing nations such as Nigeria—remain significantly underrepresented in political and electoral activities. Their low level of participation is not merely a reflection of personal disinterest but rather the result of numerous social, cultural, economic, and institutional barriers that continue to hinder their active engagement.

In many societies, socio-cultural factors play a dominant role in shaping women's political experiences. Deeply rooted patriarchal beliefs often portray politics as a male domain, discouraging women from contesting or even voting during elections. Traditional gender roles further limit women's time, confidence, and exposure to political education. In regions like Northern Nigeria, religious interpretations and cultural expectations sometimes reinforce early marriage and domestic confinement, reducing women's awareness of civic rights and opportunities for political participation. Even in

the southern parts of the country, where education levels are relatively higher, women still face social stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes that restrict their political ambitions.

Economic barriers also play a crucial role in excluding women from the electoral process. Politics in Nigeria and many other developing countries is capital-intensive, requiring significant financial resources for campaign activities, logistics, and publicity. Since women are often economically disadvantaged due to gender wage gaps and limited access to credit or employment opportunities, they struggle to compete with their male counterparts. Consequently, few women are able to sponsor themselves or attract sufficient party backing to contest elections.

Furthermore, institutional and political barriers such as weak enforcement of gender inclusion policies, lack of internal democracy in political parties, and electoral violence discourage women from active political participation. Political parties often fail to implement gender quotas or provide fair nomination processes, while electoral violence and intimidation during campaigns and voting further alienate women from the process. Inadequate media coverage of female candidates and the absence of mentorship opportunities also limit their visibility and political confidence.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Debates about women's role in society are increasingly common. Opinion differs on whether women role are primarily domestic or if they may participate in electoral processes alongside their male counterpart.

Cultural norms in Southern and Northern Nigeria restrict women's roles, often confining them to domestic duties while men dominate decision-making. These patriarchal traditions, reinforced by religious beliefs, limit women's agency and hinder their political participation. Socioeconomic challenges, including poverty and limited access to education, further exacerbate these barriers, leaving women without the resources or confidence to engage in politics.

In Nigeria, women from both regions face institutional hurdles. Despite progress in women's rights, laws and policies meant to promote gender equality often lack teeth. Quota systems and affirmative action policies are weak or poorly implemented. Male-dominated political parties control nominations, sidelining women, and electoral laws don't do enough to help. Limited access to education and info is a major obstacle. In northern Nigeria, this issue is more pronounced, leaving women unaware of their rights and lacking the skills to engage in politics. Rural areas are hit hardest, with low literacy rates and limited civic education. This gap silences their voices in decision-making.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To identify key barriers that limits women from participating in Electoral process.
2. Investigate whether political enlightenment can affect the level of women participation in Electoral process.
3. Examine the extent to which social, cultural, and economic factor can affect the level of women participation in electoral process.
4. To access the role of political parties and their institutions in promoting or limiting women in participating in Electoral process.
5. To compare the experience of women in the South with that of women in the North.
6. To provide recommendation for policy makers, civil society organization and other stakeholders on how to promote women political empowerment

1.4 RESEACH QUESTION

1. What are the major barriers women encounter during electoral process.
2. Do the women in Southern Nigeria experience the same challenges as the women in the North.
3. How do cultural, social and economic factors limit women participation in the electoral system.

4. To what extent do political parties and institution support or hinder women participation in Electoral process.
5. What strategies have been effective in promoting women participation in Electoral processes in Nigeria.
6. What policy and legislative reform can be implemented to increase the participation of women.

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1

H0: There are no significant regional differences between Southern and Northern and socioeconomic factor influencing women participation in electoral process.

H1: There are significant difference between Southern and Northern and socioeconomic factor influencing women participation in electoral process.

Hypothesis 2

H0: Support from political parties, civil society, and educational levels have no significant impact on women participation in Electoral participation in Nigeria.

H1: Support from political parties civil society and level of education have no significant impact on women participation in Electoral participation in Nigeria.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study aims to expose the barriers hindering women's electoral participation in Nigeria, specifically in Southern (Lagos, Edo, Delta) and Northern (Kano, Kaduna, FCT) regions. By identifying these obstacles, it seeks to inform stakeholders and women on addressing the issue, ultimately boosting women's involvement in politics. The research fills a knowledge gap, adding to existing discourse on Nigerian women's political engagement.

This study will synthesize women's struggles against social, cultural, religious, and political oppression in Nigeria, highlighting their emancipation efforts. It'll provide valuable insights for aspiring female politicians and policymakers, contributing to the discourse on women's empowerment. This research will shed light on the social, cultural, and economic barriers hindering women's political aspirations, enabling policymakers to create informed legislation that promotes their effective participation in politics.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is based on barriers to women participation in electoral process focusing on Lagos state, Edo state, Delta state in Southern Nigeria and also focusing on Kano, Kaduna, and Federal capital territory F.c.t in Northern Nigeria. It examines cultural, socioeconomic, political and institutional factors affecting women's electoral

participation and also examining how political parties, civil society organization, government policies work to promote or hinder women's participation.

1.8 LIMITATION OF STUDY

To be able to get quick response from others a questionnaire will be issued. The questionnaire have it limitation that it depends on written answers subjected to pre-arranged questions. The structured nature of the questionnaire has limitation that it may force the respondent to choose answers that they do not fully enclose. Other limitation include

1. Finance: Insufficient fund tend to impede the efficiency of the researcher in sourcing for relevant materials, literature, or information and in the process of data collection.
2. Time: The researcher will simultaneously engage in this study with other academic work. This consequently will cut down on the time devoted for the research work.
3. Cultural sensitivity: Culture of participants, influence research, as falling to consider cultural context, can lead to biased results, misinterpretation, and potentially harmful outcomes.

1.9 DEFINATION OF TERMS

1. **Woman:**. A female person, usually an adult aged 18 years and above.

2. Gender equality: This refers to equal opportunity and outcome for all genders free from discrimination based on sex.

3. Institutional barrier: This is a policies, procedures, or practices within organizations or systems that hinder or prevent individuals or groups from accessing resources, opportunities, or services.

4. Patriarchy: This is a social system where men hold primary power and authority, often resulting in the marginalization and oppression of women and other marginalized groups.

5. Electoral process: This refers to the series of steps and procedures used to select leaders or representatives through voting. It involves voter registration, candidate nomination, campaigning, voting and also vote counting.

6. Barriers: These are obstacles or challenges that hinders or prevent someone from achieving something or accessing something.

7. Socio-economic barriers: These are obstacles that arise from a combination of social and economic factors, which can limit an individual's or group's access to resources, opportunities, and services. .

8. Cultural barriers: These are obstacles that arise from differences in cultural values, norms, and practices. These barriers can affect communication, understanding, and relationships between individuals or groups from different cultural backgrounds.

9. Gender gap: A measurable difference between the pay, status, political preferences etc. of men and women.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Women's participation in elections is a key marker of gender equality and democratic progress. Nigeria's got a long way to go, with women still underrepresented in politics.

To understand the underlying factors responsible for this low level of participation, a conceptual framework provides a clear structure that identifies and explains the relationships between the key variables influencing women's involvement in electoral processes. A conceptual framework serves as a guide that illustrates how various factors, also known as independent variables, affect the outcome variable, which in this case is women's participation in electoral processes. The framework helps to connect theories, concepts, and empirical evidence that explain why women are marginalized or excluded from active political engagement.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES (DEPENDENT VARIABLE)

Women's involvement in electoral processes, encompassing their participation as voters, candidates, party members, election observers, and electoral officials, is significantly impacted by a range of barriers, ultimately limiting their representation and influence in shaping the country's democratic trajectory.

Cultural and Religious Barriers

One of the most significant factors affecting women's political participation is culture. In many societies, cultural norms and traditions place women in subordinate roles, restricting their involvement in public affairs. Patriarchal beliefs often promote the idea that leadership and politics are male responsibilities, while women are expected to focus

on domestic duties. Similarly, certain religious interpretations reinforce gender inequality by discouraging women from assuming public leadership roles. These cultural and religious constraints create a social environment that limits women's political ambition and participation. Cultural and Religious Barriers

Cultural norms and traditions significantly hinder women's political participation, relegating them to subordinate roles and restricting public involvement. Patriarchal beliefs and certain religious interpretations reinforce this, limiting women's ambition. To challenge these narratives, some advocate for cultural sensitivity training and community engagement to shift mindsets. Others push for policies promoting gender equality.

Socio-Economic Barriers

Economic inequality and limited access to education also play a major role in hindering women's political engagement. Many women lack the financial resources needed to fund election campaigns, pay nomination fees, or mobilize supporters. Additionally, low levels of education and political awareness reduce their understanding of electoral rights and processes. Poverty and economic dependency further make women vulnerable to political manipulation and discourage them from contesting elections. Political and Institutional Barriers

The structure and practices of political institutions often create additional obstacles. Political parties, which are supposed to be the main platforms for democratic

participation, are largely male-dominated. Internal party structures tend to favor men in candidate selection, and women are often excluded from key decision-making positions. Electoral violence, harassment, and intimidation during campaigns also discourage women from participating actively. Moreover, the weak implementation of gender quota systems and the lack of political will from government institutions make it difficult for women to attain fair representation in governance.

Legal and Policy Barriers

Another critical challenge arises from weak legal frameworks and policy enforcement. Although Nigeria and many other countries have signed international agreements promoting gender equality—such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the African Union’s Maputo Protocol—implementation remains poor. National laws and electoral policies often fail to incorporate effective gender-sensitive measures that ensure equal opportunities for women. Conceptual Relationship

The conceptual framework underscores that a comprehensive approach tackling cultural, socio-economic, political, legal, and media-related obstacles can substantially boost women's involvement in electoral processes, ultimately strengthening governance and democracy. By addressing these interconnected barriers, societies can create an environment where women can participate equally, contributing to more representative and inclusive decision-making processes.

2.1.2 OVERVIEW OF WOMEN ELECTORAL BARRIERS

Women in Nigeria face significant obstacles to electoral participation, including deep-rooted socio-cultural barriers, entrenched patriarchal structures, and institutional challenges that perpetuate inequality. These issues are particularly evident in states like Lagos, Edo, Delta, Kaduna, Kano, and the FCT, where women's involvement in voting, candidacy, activism, and campaigns is hindered by barriers like political violence, patriarchal norms, and limited access to resources.

Nigeria's patriarchal system and cultural expectations severely limit women's leadership roles, confining them to domestic spheres. Authority figures enforce traditional gender norms, discouraging public participation. Religious practices, like the purdah system in Northern Nigeria, further restrict women's involvement in politics.

Major Barriers Women Encounter During Electoral Process

Nigerian women are making strides in politics, with increased voter turnout and more women in public office. However, obstacles like patriarchal norms, limited resources, and cultural expectations still hinder their progress, keeping them underrepresented in elective positions.

Thuggery

Thuggery is a destructive force that erodes the fabric of society and breeds fear and distrust. It fosters a disregard for the rule of law and the principles of justice even as it

erodes the values of empathy, compassion and respect for others, leading to a breakdown of social order. Societies afflicted by thuggery suffer from increased crime rates, reduced quality of life and a general sense of unrest and anarchy.

Political thuggery can be defined as any negative behaviour associated with violence, hooliganism, kidnapping, murder, assassination, gang action and trouble ‘shooting’, that is strongly instrumental in distorting electoral results, snatching of ballot boxes, alteration of election results, elimination of political opponents under the influence of drugs and supernatural powers. Nigeria’s political system is majorly characterized by acts of thuggery, violence, harassment etc. Overall, political thuggery is characterized by robbery, intimidation, gangsterism, murder, physical assault and often involves physical combat between two opposing gangs or groups, which ultimately generates inter-personal or group hostilities. Since the pre-independence General Elections of 1959, politics in Nigeria has been characterized by thuggery and violence (Abubakar, 2015). Achimugu (2024) conceptualizes thuggery as the actions and behaviours of individuals who have succumbed to lack of moral compass and empathy for others by engaging in violence, intimidation, lawlessness, and criminal acts without regards for societal norms and values. He noted that thugs perpetrate crimes such as physical assault, robbery and extortion, often using brute force to achieve their goals. According to him, those who engage in thuggery prioritize their own desires and power over the well-being of others thereby causing harm and suffering without remorse. Also, Lawal cited in Idris (2011) views thuggery as criminalization of politics. He noted that when politics is criminalized, it is

left in the hands of ruffians, thugs, hoodlums and hooligans, while the good citizens are scared away. The prevalence of electoral violence and the hostile environment, characterised by threats and physical attacks, has made political involvement dangerous for women (Ngara & Ayabam, 2013; Luka, 2011).

In a political system where thuggery is prevalent, there is the likelihood that citizens' participation will drastically reduce. This stems from the fact that citizens would not like to mortgage their life for election since their lives are at stake if they venture into the business of participating or voting during election. The presence of political thugs create a violent and unsafe atmosphere around elections. Women who are often more vulnerable to harassment and physical assault may avoid participating in order to protect themselves. The exposure to violence during election can leave women emotionally stressed. Targeted with verbal abuse, harassment, or threat when they try to vote. This has discouraged their future involvement in politics.

BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESS

Southern Meticulousness

Women in Nigeria are a massive untapped resource, making up half the population yet underrepresented in politics. Southern women have relatively more access to education and employment, but still face obstacles to full electoral participation. These barriers are deeply ingrained in societal structures, perpetuating gender inequality.

1. Socio-Cultural Barriers

One of the most enduring challenges for women in Southern Nigeria is the persistence of patriarchal cultural norms. Despite modernization, society continues to view politics as a male-dominated sphere, discouraging women from active participation. Many women are taught from an early age that their primary responsibilities lie within the home as wives and mothers, not in public leadership.

Furthermore, a politically active woman may be stigmatized as disrespectful or morally loose, which discourages many from contesting elections. Traditional gender roles and community expectations also restrict women's ability to attend political meetings or campaign at night—periods when most political activities take place.

2. Economic Barriers

Economic inequality presents another significant obstacle. Political participation, especially contesting for elective positions, requires substantial financial resources for campaigns, publicity, and mobilization. Many women lack access to such funds due to their limited control over family income, fewer assets, and exclusion from political patronage networks.

In Southern Nigeria, although women are active in trading and small-scale business, few possess the wealth or connections that male politicians often rely on. Political parties and

sponsors (mostly men) tend to support male aspirants, leaving female candidates financially disadvantaged.

3. Political Barriers

The structure and operation of political parties in Nigeria further limit women's participation. Most parties are male-dominated, with decision-making power concentrated in the hands of men. Women are often marginalized during party nominations and rarely selected as flag bearers for major elective offices.

Moreover, the political environment is characterized by violence, intimidation, and harassment, especially during campaigns and elections. Such hostility discourages many women from participating actively in politics. In some cases, women who do contest face ridicule and a lack of support even from fellow women, due to long-standing social conditioning.

4. Institutional and Legal Barriers

Although Nigeria has adopted several international and national gender equality policies—such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the National Gender Policy—implementation remains weak. There are no constitutional quotas guaranteeing a specific percentage of seats for women, unlike in countries such as Rwanda or South Africa.

Additionally, the electoral system itself often suffers from irregularities, including vote-buying, rigging, and manipulation, which undermine fair competition and transparency.

These institutional weaknesses create an environment where women find it difficult to succeed or trust the process.

5. Media and Representation Barriers

The media plays a vital role in shaping public perception of political candidates. However, female politicians often receive biased or inadequate media coverage, with attention focused on their marital status, physical appearance, or emotional disposition rather than their qualifications or policies.

Furthermore, the lack of visible role models in political leadership positions limits the inspiration and mentorship available to younger women, thereby perpetuating a cycle of underrepresentation.

Women in Southern Nigeria have made significant strides in education and entrepreneurship, but their participation in electoral practices continues to be constrained by socio-cultural, economic, political, and institutional barriers. Overcoming these challenges requires deliberate action, including the enforcement of gender-inclusive policies, financial support for female candidates, civic education, and the creation of safe spaces for women in politics.

A more inclusive political system will not only empower women but also strengthen democracy and promote balanced national development.

BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESS

Northern Meticulousness

In Northern Nigeria, women's involvement in political and electoral processes remains one of the lowest in the country. Although women form a large portion of the voting population, their representation in elective and appointive positions is extremely limited. This situation is influenced by a combination of cultural, religious, economic, and institutional factors that shape gender relations and restrict women's access to political participation. In the north one thing the women face is female seclusion from public view and interaction with men outside their families. This seclusion is known as **Purdah**. These barriers have deep historical and socio-religious roots, which continue to reinforce male dominance in the political space.

1. Low Educational Attainment

Education is a major factor influencing political awareness and participation. In Northern Nigeria, female literacy and school enrollment rates remain significantly lower than in the South. Many girls drop out of school early due to poverty, early marriage, and cultural restrictions on co-education. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and UNICEF, the northern states consistently record the lowest female literacy and school enrollment rates in the country. In some northern state like Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara, and yobe, female literay rate are below 30%. In contrast, Southern states such as Lagos, Imo, and Anambra record literacy rate above 80% among women.

As result, many northern women lack the basic political knowledge, confidence, and communication skills necessary to participate meaningfully in electoral processes—whether as voters, party members, or candidates.

2. Early Marriage and Family Restrictions

Early and forced marriages are still prevalent in many northern communities. Justified by cultural and religious beliefs. Many girls are married off between the age of 1 and 17, cutting short their education and personal development. Once married, women are expected to focus on domestic duties and child rearing. Once married, women are expected to prioritize domestic responsibilities and seek permission from their husbands for public activities in many northern communities, women require approval from male guardians either from their father, husband, or brothers to engage in public activities. This system of male guardianship restrict women's autonomy to make decisions. This dependency reduces women's autonomy and limits their ability to engage in political activities, especially those requiring travel or public interaction.

3. Lack of Female Role Models and Mentorship

The scarcity of women in leadership positions means there are few role models or mentors to inspire and guide younger women into politics. The few women who succeed

often face hostility, criticism, or accusations of immorality. Mendes (2018) emphasised in his study that another significant obstacle to feminisation (women) is the relative lack of a ‘critical mass’ [29] of highly recognised or significantly successful mentorship and routines.

This lack of visible female leadership perpetuates a cycle where women remain politically invisible and excluded from decision-making processes. Women in Northern Nigeria face complex barriers to political participation rooted in cultural traditions, religious interpretations, limited education, and economic dependency. These factors combine to create a political environment where women are marginalized and underrepresented.

4. Poverty

Poverty is widespread in the northern region, and women are among the most economically disadvantaged groups. Most northern women rely on their husbands for financial support and have limited access to land, property, or capital.

Since politics in Nigeria often requires substantial financial investment for campaigns and mobilization, economic dependence makes it nearly impossible for many women to run for office. Political parties and sponsors rarely fund female aspirants, viewing them as less competitive.

5. Political Violence And Insecurity

Women in the north have had series of attacks which have become a threat to their lives and have been seen in various form including, terrorism by Boko Haram and banditry. Due to the fact that women are vulnerable to harassment, intimidation, and violence during elections, both at polling stations and campaign grounds it has discouraged northern women from political involvement.

6. Religious Barriers

Religion particularly Islam is a dominant influence in Northern Nigeria, While Islam itself does not prohibit women from political involvement , conservative interpretation by local religious leaders have been used to discourage female leadership. Some of these leaders teaches that a woman's voice should not be heard in public, women should not lead men or hold authority over them, politics is a dirty or immoral field unsuitable for women. These teachings foster an environment of religious justification for gender inequality, leading many women to internalize submissive roles and avoid politics altogether. However it is important to note that progressive Islamic scholar argue that Islam promotes justice, equality and participation of women in community affairs.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework is the foundation upon which a research study is built. It provides the structure, concepts, and theories that explain why the research problem

exists and guides how it should be studied. It connects research problem to existing knowledge by using established theories to explain relationships between variables. The importance of theories in political discourse cannot be over emphasized. This is because it proffers empirical based general explanatory laws that are scientific in nature through synthesizing and integrating of empirical data for maximum clarification and unification. The theoretical basis of this study is anchored on

2.2.1 FEMINIST THEORY

Feminist theory is a complex and multifaceted ideology that seeks to understand and challenge the ways in which gender inequality and discrimination are perpetuated in society. At its core, feminist theory advocates for the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes. It is grounded in the belief that gender is a social construct that shapes individuals' experiences and opportunities in profound ways. Mary Wollstonecraft is widely recognized as the founder of feminist theory, particularly due to her seminal work "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman," published in 1792.

Historical Development

The roots of feminist theory can be traced back to the 19th and early 20th centuries when women began to organize and advocate for their rights. The first wave of feminism focused primarily on securing legal rights for women, such as the right to vote and own

property. This wave laid the foundation for the core principles of feminist theory, including the belief in gender equality and the recognition of women's rights as human rights. The second wave of feminism emerged in the 1960s and 1970s and was characterized by a focus on **challenging traditional gender roles** and norms. This wave brought attention to issues such as reproductive rights, domestic violence, and workplace discrimination. Feminist theorists during this time began to explore the ways in which patriarchy, or male dominance, perpetuates inequality and oppression. Overall, feminist theory has evolved and expanded over time to encompass a wide range of perspectives and approaches. From liberal feminism, which focuses on achieving gender equality through legal reform, to radical feminism, which seeks to dismantle patriarchy and create a more equitable society, feminist theory continues to be a powerful tool for understanding and challenging gender inequality.

2.2.2 LIBERAL PERSPECTIVE

Liberal feminism is a branch of feminist theory that focuses on achieving gender equality through reform within the existing societal structure. Liberal feminism is thought to have emerged in the **18th and 19th century** with the rise of the political philosophy known as classical liberalism. This was a period of great social change in western countries alongside the rise of capitalism. Advocates of liberal feminism believe that change can be brought about through legal and political means, such as equal pay laws and anti-discrimination policies. This approach emphasizes individual rights and opportunities for

women, aiming to create a more inclusive and fair society for all genders. This is a prominent [branch of feminism](#) it was born in western countries and emphasizes the value of freedom which can be achieved through political and legal reform. The ideas of liberal feminism are rooted in liberalism, a political philosophy that encourages the development of freedom, particularly in the political and economic spheres. The key ideas of liberalism include individual freedom, democracy, equal opportunities, and equal right. Feminist theory often focuses on analyzing [gender inequality](#). Themes often explored in feminist theory include [discrimination](#), [objectification](#) (especially [sexual objectification](#)), [oppression](#), [patriarchy](#), [stereotyping](#), art history and contemporary art, and aesthetics. Liberal Feminism as a theoretical framework to assess barriers to women's participation during electoral processes provide valuable frameworks for analyzing women's electoral participation in the Northern and Southern regional in Nigeria. Liberal feminism emphasis the need for women to have equal access to political opportunities, such as running for office and holding elected positions. (Nienaber and Moraka 2016) The theory exemplified the beginning of representative democracy. Liberal feminism, with its emphasis on women's rights and freedom to participate fully in electoral politics within a democratic system, offers a valuable theoretical framework for understanding the barriers faced by women in the south and Northern region of Nigeria. This feminist perspective highlights the gender-based barriers, including cultural norms and institutional discrimination, that continue to hinder women's active participation in the electoral process, mirroring the broader challenges faced by women in Nigeria.

2.2.3 MARXIST PERSPECTIVE

This type of feminism is based on the understandings of Marxism, proposed by Karl Marx and collaborator Friedrich Engels in the 19th century. Marx demonstrated how [capitalism](#) was able to grow through the exploitation of labor. Social classes were described to explain how one class controls the other as a means to produce goods. People who are of a high-class level of economic condition are the bourgeoisie, whereas people who are of a low-class level are claimed as the proletariat since they become the labors of the bourgeoisie (Marx & Engels, 1848).

Marxist feminists regard classism, rather than sexism, as the fundamental cause of women's oppression. They explore how ideas of gender structure production in capitalism and argue that women are exploited by a capitalist society. Marxist feminists regard classism, rather than sexism, as the fundamental cause of women's oppression. They explore how ideas of gender structure production in capitalism and argue that women are exploited by a capitalist society.

Marxist feminists can still be used to explore how the political economy is gendered in late-stage capitalism and how the social reproduction of people and communities renews capitalism (Armstrong, 2020).

2.2.4 INTERSECTIONAL THEORY:

The term intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, a prominent American civil rights advocate and a leading scholar of critical race theory, in her **1989** article “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics.” intersectionality is another key concept in feminist theory that acknowledges the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, gender, and sexuality. It highlights the ways in which these intersecting identities can create unique experiences of discrimination and privilege. Feminist theory that incorporates intersectionality recognizes the importance of addressing multiple forms of oppression and privilege, understanding that individuals exist at the intersections of various social identities. By centering intersectionality in our analysis, we can create more inclusive and nuanced approaches to feminist activism and advocacy, uplifting the voices of those who experience overlapping forms of marginalization. A methodology that systematically examines how gender and other social factors, such as age, disability, ethnicity and migration status, shape power relations and create differences in needs, capacities and inequalities among individuals and groups. It recognizes that gender is not a homogenous category, and that overlapping systems of oppression can impact people’s lives in different ways. The goal is to address the root causes of inequality and empower women, girls and gender-diverse persons.

The intersection of cultural and socioeconomic barriers often magnifies challenges. For instance: Women in northern Nigeria face compounding disadvantages of poverty, limited education, and restrictive cultural norms (Dim & Asomah, 2019). Religious

norms further inhibit women's access to education and employment, creating a cyclical barrier to women political participation.

CRITICISMS OF FEMINIST THEORY

Essentialism and Exclusivity

Essentialism and exclusivity are two common criticisms leveled against feminist theory. Essentialism refers to the tendency to oversimplify and generalize the experiences of all women, assuming that they all share the same struggles and goals. This can be problematic as it ignores the diversity among women, including differences in race, class, sexuality, and ability. By essentializing women, feminist theory runs the risk of excluding the voices and experiences of marginalized groups within the feminist movement.

Similarly, exclusivity is another criticism that feminist theory faces. Exclusivity refers to the tendency of some feminist perspectives to prioritize the experiences and needs of certain groups of women over others. For example, mainstream feminist movements have historically been criticized for focusing primarily on the concerns of white, middle-class, heterosexual women, while neglecting the issues faced by women of color, LGBTQ+ women, and women with disabilities. This narrow focus can alienate and marginalize women who do not fit within the dominant feminist narrative.

To address these criticisms, feminist theorists have increasingly embraced the concept of intersectionality. Intersectionality recognizes that individuals hold multiple, intersecting

identities that shape their experiences of oppression and privilege. By acknowledging the complexity of identity and the ways in which different forms of oppression intersect, feminist theory can become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all women.

2.2.5.POLITICAL OPORTUNITY STRUCTURE THEORY

Political opportunity theory, also known as the political process theory or political opportunity structure, First introduced by Eisinger (1973), and has been elaborated by Tarrow (1983, 1989). It is an **approach of social movements that is heavily influenced by political sociology**. It argues that success or failure of social movements is affected primarily by political opportunities. Structure in Nigeria has played pivotal role to reduce women inclusiveness during political participation as the system have been structured in a way to favour men .

2.3 EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Bryon's (2024) study reveals that deep-rooted societal norms and expectations significantly hinder women's participation in Nigerian politics. These cultural barriers, often rooted in traditional gender roles, perpetuate the perception that politics is a male-dominated domain. Discrimination, violence, and economic disparities further discourage women from entering politics. Toeing toward economic constraints on women's political participation Danbala, et al (2024) study reveals that despite increased workforce participation, Nigerian women continue to face significant barriers to economic

empowerment and entrepreneurship. Persistent gender inequalities persist in pay, working conditions, and leadership roles. While women constitute a majority of Nigeria's population, their numerical strength hasn't translated into commensurate representation in leadership positions. Cultural and religious norms often relegate women to secondary roles, hindering their political and economic advancement. These entrenched barriers hinder women's ability to participate in the workforce and achieve their economic potential fully. In addition, Okunnu's (2024) study reveals that In Northern Nigeria, culture and religion are deeply intertwined, reinforcing patriarchal norms that often marginalise women. This cultural imposition, which restricts women's roles to domestic spheres, is exemplified by former President Muhammadu Buhari's humorous statement suggesting that his wife's place is in the "kitchen and the other room." While criticised, this statement reflects a common societal belief about women's roles in the region. This view is corroborated by Abdussalam and Zahra (2019) in their study on women's participation and political process in the 2019 general election in Kaduna State, found that patriarchal structures persisted within the political processes of Kaduna State during the 2019 general elections. This persistent patriarchy continues to hinder women's participation in electoral politics, as evidenced by the low number of women in elected positions in subsequent elections, including the 2023 general elections. In the same vein, Ogunbumi (2024) argues that the existence of Violence against Women in Politics (VAWIP) is not just denying female politicians a level playing ground but is also preventing those women or young girls who have the intention of participating in politics

and governance of Nigeria to jettison their ambitions. This study, therefore, agrees with Soudani and Abbes (cited in Ogunbumi, 2024) that the acts of violence that target women active in civil and political life have a dissuasive effect on any female citizen who has the will or intention to become a public figure or a politically active person. The cynical argument that politics is brutal and that criticism and attack are inevitable for women seeking to compete with men in a traditionally male dominated sphere simply normalises such violence against women in the field of politics.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explain the method, and process, design that the researcher used to conduct this investigation. It gives a detailed description: The research design, area of study,

population of study, sample size, and sampling technique, method of data collection, instrument for data collection, method of data analysis.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a methodical approach or plan that a researcher uses to address a hypothesis or question. It outlines the procedures, methods, and resources a researcher uses to collect, analyze, and assess data. An efficient research design improves the data validity, reliability and generalizability. In this study, a case study methodology was applied. A case study design entails a through and comprehensive examination of one or more examples in context of real-world situation. The research is a comparative study of the nature of barrier women in politics face in northern and southern Nigeria.

3.2 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

The largest population, from which the sample is really drawn, is referred to as the population of study. It represents the larger area of interest that the researcher intend to look into. A greater range of characteristics such as age, location, occupation and other relevant attributes, can be present in the population of interest.

The base population of women in Delta, Lagos, Edo, Kano Kaduna and federal capital territory is 1,495,800 according to National population census 2006; and according to demographic projection in 2024 was 1,757,000.

3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Sample size is defined as the number of observation used for determining the estimation of a given population.

Sampling technique refers to a method used to select a subset of individuals or entities from a larger population for a research or data collection relevant to the research question technique to get the data.

This study adopted the Cochran (1977) sample size determination formula to calculate the sample size.

$$N = \frac{Z^2 \cdot P(1-P)}{E^2}$$

Where N=Sample population

Z= Statistics level of confidence(1.96)

P=Expected prevalence (0.50)

I=Constant

E=Marginal error(0.05)

$$\text{Sample population} = \frac{1.96^2 [0.50 (1-0.5)]}{0.05^2}$$

$$= \frac{3.8416 [(0.50 (0.50))]}{0.0025}$$

$$0.0025 \\ = 384.16$$

The sample size determined through the above formula was 390 respondent.

In this study, a non-probability sampling technique was used in selecting women from Lagos, Delta, Edo state, Kano, Kaduna and F.C.T. from the Southern and Northern region as respondent. Since it was a public opinion survey, respondent where selected for the study. This was necessary because of the unavailability of sampling frame.

3.4 INSTRUMENT OF DATA COLLECTION

The instrument for this research is from primary and secondary data mixed method, The instrument will consist of two part. Part 1 is meant to elicit demographic information about the respondent, part 2 is made up of four sections, meant to gather information concerning the research topic and will be made up of 4 items each given a total of 16 items in the questionnaire. The respondent are married. The instrument is a 4 point rating scale, where the respondent is to tick either “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree”, “strongly disagree”

3.5 VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

To ensure content validity of the instruments, the researcher’s supervisor and two expert in the Department of Political science in Faculty of Social science, University of Benin,

Benin city, Edo state validated the instrument. The experts carefully examine the relevance of the instrument in other to ensure that the instruments measure what it is intended to measure and to ascertain the appropriateness of the instrument.

3.6 RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

In other to ensure the reliability of the instrument, the test split half reliability method was adopted. The questionnaire was conducted using respondent outside the target population. Twenty (20) female outside the sample size were administered the questionnaire within a period of two weeks. The score obtained from both exercise will be correlated using the cronbach's Alpha statistic tool which was 0.641.

3.7 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher administered the questionnaire to the respondents who are expected to the respond to all items by ticking one of the options from the response columns. Completed questionnaire were collected as soon as they were filled by the respondents.

3.8 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis entails the consideration of the observation of data obtained into descriptive statements. It is simply concerned with how the researcher intends to process the data

obtained and apply them in testing the hypothesis as well as to justify choice of the selected analytical technique.

The data collected from the respondent was analyzed using the mean (\bar{x}) standard deviation (SD), and two sample independent T-test. The mean and standard deviation were used to answer the data collected for the research question while a two-sample independent T-test was used to test the hypothesis at a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was based on the mean value of 2.50 such that are calculated means (\bar{x}) equal to or greater than 2.50 was regarded as high extent while any mean (\bar{x}) less than 2.50 was regarded as a low extent.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter deals with presentation of results and discussion of findings. The results of the analysis are presented in the order of the research questions that guided the study.

Presentation of Results

4.1 EXCLUSIVE TO THE SOUTH

Research Question One: What are the major barriers women encounter during electoral processes?

Table 1: Distribution on the major barriers women encounter during electoral processes?

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Traditional belief causes women political barriers	168 (47.2%)	124 (34.8%)	76 (13.1%)	28 (5.0%)	3.72	.573	Agreed
2	Low literacy rate among women, limits women political awareness	124 (34.3%)	212 (47.1%)	44 (9.2%)	20 (6.7%)	3.52	.580	Agreed
3	Lack of political education leads to women political barriers	108 (33.1%)	232 (52.6%)	24 (5.5%)	36 (8.8%)	3.34	.772	Agreed
4	Women lack financial resources to fund campaign	188 (50.2%)	120 (32.4%)	56 (12.1%)	36 (8.1%)	3.42	.642	Agreed
5	Political parties, prioritizing men over women in leadership position leads to women political barrier..	132 (35.2%)	124 (32.4%)	92 (20.3%)	68 (15.5%)	3.50	.614	Agreed

Cluster mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; ≤ 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The result in Table 1 reflect the names of some women in Edo, Delta, Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Federal capital territory in Southern with the mean rating ranging from 3.34 to 3.72 while the standard deviation also ranges from .573 to .772. The highest mean of 3.72 shows that Traditional belief is one of the political barriers. The mean 3.52 shows that, Low literacy rate among women, is one of the political barriers. The mean 3.50 shows that Lack of political education is one of the political barriers. The mean 3.42 shows that Women lacking financial resources to fund campaign is one of the political barriers. The lowest mean of 3.34 indicates that Political parties, prioritizing men over women in leadership position is also a political barriers that limits women in Southern Nigeria.

The findings thereby revealed that Traditional belief with the highest value of mean is one of the common barriers identified in Southern region of Nigeria. Followed by Low literacy, Lack of political education, Lack of financial resources and political parties prioritizing men over women, all these are the major barriers women encounter, during electoral processes in Southern Nigeria.

Research question two: Do the women in Southern Nigerian and Northern Nigeria experience the same challenges with the women in Northern Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation showing if Southern and Northern women experience the same challenges

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Southern and Northern women are subjected to political violence and intimidation	92 (17.7%)	188 (36.0%)	48 (9.2%)	72 (13.8%)	3.54	.579	Agree
2	Southern and Northern women are stereotyped in professional spaces.	144 (24.0%)	156 (26.0%)	60 (10.0%)	40 (6.7%)	3.42	.575	Agree
3	Southern and Northern women are both victims of regional insecurities	168 (28.6%)	122 (19.0%)	80 (14.3%)	40 (7.1%)	3.20	.535	Agree
4	Southern and Northern women are both restricted by religion	96 (20.7%)	124 (26.7%)	108 (23.3%)	72 (15.5%)	3.26	.565	Agree
5	Southern and Northern women are illiterate	132 (26.7%)	116 (23.4%)	64 (12.9%)	88 (18.0%)	3.12	.689	Agree

Cluster mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; ≤ 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Results in Table 2 reflects the similarities and differences between Southern and Northern women when it comes to challenges encountered during electoral processes, with the mean value ranging from 3.12 to 3.54 while the standard deviation also ranges from .535 to .689. the mean of 3.54 shows that Southern and Northern women are subjected to political violence and intimidation. The mean of 3.42 shows Southern and Northern women are stereotyped in professional spaces. The mean of 3.26 shows that Southern and Northern women are both restricted by religion. The mean of 3.20

Southern and Northern women are both victims of regional insecurities. The lowest mean of 3.12 shows Southern and Northern women are illiterate.

The findings revealed that the similarities between the women in Southern Nigeria and the women in Northern Nigeria includes That Southern and Northern women are subjected to political violence and intimidation, Southern and Northern women are stereotyped in professional spaces, Southern and Northern women are both victims of regional insecurities Southern and Northern women are both restricted by religion and also that Southern and Northern women are illiterate.

Research question three: How does cultural, social and economic factor limit women participation during electoral processes?

Table 3: mean and standard deviation showing how cultural, social and economic factor limit women participation during electoral processes

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Women who are politically active, are known to be wayward, rebellious and bad wives.	212 (50.2%)	120 (30.2%)	48 (11.3%)	20 (8.2%)	3.10	.789	Agree
2	Economic hardship, household responsibility limits the time women can dedicate to politics	144 (38.2%)	196 (38.6%)	40 (13.5%)	20 (9.7%)	3.10	.789	Agree
3	Lower literacy rate reduce women awareness of voting and political participation	132 (37.8%)	156 (33.5%)	44 (11.7%)	68 (17.0%)	2.80	.948	Agree
4	Religious teachings are interpreted to limit women involvement in politics.	168 (48.9%)	184 (32.4%)	16 (12.1%)	32 (8.1%)	2.92	.886	Agree
5	Women are not free to attend social gathering	108 (35.2%)	140 (32.4%)	68 (20.3%)	84 (15.5%)	2.96	.832	Agree

Cluster mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; ≤ 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 3 shows, how cultural, social, and economic factor limit women participation during electoral processes with mean value ranging from 2.80 to 3.10 while the standard deviation also ranges from .789 to 948. The mean 3.10 indicates that Women who are politically active, are known to be wayward, rebellious and bad wives.. The other mean 3.10 shows Economic hardship, household responsibility limits the time women can dedicate to politics. The mean 2.96 indicates that Lower literacy rate reduce women

awareness of voting and political participation. The mean 2.92 indicates that Religious teachings are interpreted to limit women involvement in politics. The lowest mean of 2.80 Women are not free to attend social gathering.

Findings from the analysis revealed that cultural, social and economic factor has limited women in various ways which includes the fact that women are women who are politically active, are known to be wayward, rebellious and bad wives, Economic hardship, household responsibility limits the time women can dedicate to politics, Lower literacy rate reduce women awareness of voting and political participation Religious teachings are interpreted to limit women involvement in politics and also Women are not free to attend social gathering.

Research question four: To what extent do political parties and institutions support or hinder women participation in electoral process?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation showing the extent political parties and institutions support or hinder women participation in electoral process

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Parties imposing exorbitant nomination fees, have restricted women from participating in politics	168 (47.2%)	124 (34.8%)	76 (13.1%)	28 (5.0%)	3.72	.573	Agree
2	Electoral institution has failed to protect women from harassment, intimidation, and violence during election.	124 (34.3%)	212 (47.1%)	44 (9.2%)	20 (6.7%)	3.52	.580	Agree
3	Political parties sometimes field female candidates to demonstrate inclusivity and attract female voters	108 (33.1%)	232 (52.6%)	24 (5.5%)	36 (8.8%)	3.34	.772	Agree
4	Institutions like INEC organize voters education campaign that encourage women to register and vote.	188 (50.2%)	120 (32.4%)	56 (12.1%)	36 (8.1%)	3.42	.642	Agree
5	The cost for women to participate in electoral process is less expensive	132 (35.2%)	124 (32.4%)	92 (20.3%)	68 (15.5%)	3.50	.614	Agree

Cluster mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; ≤ 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 4 reflects the extent in which political parties and institutions support or hinder women participation in electoral process , with a mean rating ranging from 3.34 to 3.72 while the standard deviation also ranges from 6.14 to 7.72. the mean 3.72 indicates that Parties imposing exorbitant nomination fees, have restricted women from participating in politics. The mean 3.52 indicates that electoral institution has failed to promote women from harassment, intimidation ,and violence during

elections, 3.34 shows Political parties sometimes field female candidates to demonstrate inclusivity and attract female voters. The mean 3.46 indicates that Institutions like INEC organize voters education campaign that encourage women to register and vote. While 3.50 indicates that the cost for women to participate in electoral process is less expensive. The above findings revealed that political parties and institutions support women participation by sometimes fielding female candidates to demonstrate inclusivity and attract female voters, Institutions like INEC organize voters education campaign that encourages women to register and vote and also the cost for women to participate, in electoral process is less expensive.

The finding also revealed that political parties and institution hinders women participation in electoral process by imposing exorbitant nomination fees, which have restricted women from participating in politics, Electoral institution has failed to protect women from harassment, intimidation ,and violence during election.

Research question five: What strategies have been effective in promoting women’s participation in electoral processes in Nigeria?

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation showing the extent political parties and institutions support or hinder women participation in electoral process.

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Advocacy group have used court to fight against discrimination.	168 (47.2%)	124 (34.8%)	76 (13.1%)	28 (5.0%)	3.72	.573	Agree
2	International bodies like UN have supported Nigerian women with leadership training campaign, strategies and financial empowerment	124 (34.3%)	212 (47.1%)	44 (9.2%)	20 (6.7%)	3.52	.580	Agree
3	Most parties have women wings that mobilize female voters and encourages participation	108 (33.1%)	232 (52.6%)	24 (5.5%)	36 (8.8%)	3.34	.772	Agree
4	Civil education campaign through radios, television and social media highlight the importance of women voters	188 (50.2%)	120 (32.4%)	56 (12.1%)	36 (8.1%)	3.42	.642	Agree
5	Grass root mobilization have been used to mobilize women at the community level	132 (35.2%)	124 (32.4%)	92 (20.3%)	68 (15.5%)	3.50	.614	Agree

Cluster mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; ≤ 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 5 reflects the strategies that have been effective in promoting women’s participation in electoral processes in Nigeria, with a mean rating ranging from 3.34 to 3.72 while the standard deviation also ranges from 6.14 to 7.72. The mean 3.72 indicates that Advocacy group have used court to fight against discrimination. The mean, 3.52 shows that International bodies like UN have supported Nigerian women with leadership training campaign, strategies and financial empowerment. The mean 3.34

shows that most parties have women wings that mobilize female voters and encourages participation.3.42 indicates that Civil education campaign through radios, television and social media highlight the importance of women voters .While 3.50 indicates that Grass root mobilization have been used to mobilize women at the community level.

The finding from the analysis shows the strategies that have been effective in promoting women's participation in electoral processes in Nigeria they include Advocacy group have used court to fight against discrimination, International bodies like UN have supported Nigerian women with leadership training campaign, strategies and financial empowerment. Some parties have women wings that mobilize female voters, and encourages participation. Civil education campaign through radios, television and social media highlight the importance of women voters. The cost for women to participate in electoral process is less expensive.

Research question six: What policies and legislative reform can be implemented to increase the participation of women?

Table 6: Mean and standard deviation showing the policies and legislative reform that can be implemented to increase the participation of women.

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Subsidized or free nomination form for female candidates should be implemented	168 (47.2%)	124 (34.8%)	76 (13.1%)	28 (5.0%)	3.72	.573	Agree
2	Create laws that criminalized gender based political violence, harassment and intimidation.	124 (34.3%)	212 (47.1%)	44 (9.2%)	20 (6.7%)	3.52	.580	Agree
3	Support training and mentorship program to prepare women for political roles	108 (33.1%)	232 (52.6%)	24 (5.5%)	36 (8.8%)	3.34	.772	Agree
4	Establish special campaign funds, or grants for women provided by government, electoral bodies or donor.	188 (50.2%)	120 (32.4%)	56 (12.1%)	36 (8.1%)	3.42	.642	Agree
5	Support training and mentorship program to prepare women for political roles	132 (35.2%)	124 (32.4%)	92 (20.3%)	68 (15.5%)	3.50	.614	Agree

Cluster mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; ≤ 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 6 reflects the strategies that have been effective in promoting women’s participation in electoral processes in Nigeria, with a mean rating ranging from 3.34 to 3.72 while the standard deviation also ranges from 6.14 to 7.72. The mean 3.72 shows that subsidized or free nomination form for female candidates should be implemented. The mean, 3.52 create laws that criminalized gender based political violence, harassment and intimidation. The mean 3.34 Support training and mentorship program to prepare women for political roles.3.42 show that establish special campaign

funds, or grants for women provided by government, electoral bodies or donor, 3.42 indicates that Civil education campaign through radios, television and social media highlight the importance of women voters .While 3.50 indicates that support training and mentorship program to prepare women for political roles should be implemented.

The above findings revealed that implementing polices like subsidized or free nomination form for female candidates should be implemented, create laws that criminalized gender based political violence, harassment and intimidation, support training and mentorship program to prepare women for political roles, establish special campaign funds, or grants for women provided by government, electoral bodies or donor, Civil education campaign through radios, television and social media to highlight the importance of women voters and also training and mentorship program to prepare women for political roles should be implemented to increase women participation during electoral process.

Presentation of Results

4.2 EXCLUSIVE TO WOMEN IN THE NORTH

Research Question One: What are the major barriers women in the north encounter during electoral processes?

Table 1: Distribution on the major barriers women encounter during electoral processes?

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Female seclusion have restricted women from participating in political activities	168 (47.2%)	124 (34.8%)	76 (13.1%)	28 (5.0%)	3.72	.573	Agree
2	Low literacy rate among women, limits women political awareness	124 (34.3%)	212 (47.1%)	44 (9.2%)	20 (6.7%)	3.52	.580	Agree
3	Lack of female role model have not made women see the need to step out.	108 (33.1%)	232 (52.6%)	24 (5.5%)	36 (8.8%)	3.34	.772	Agree
4	Women lack financial resources to fund campaign	188 (50.2%)	120 (32.4%)	56 (12.1%)	36 (8.1%)	3.42	.642	Agree
5	Fear of insecurity have keep women far from political activities.	132 (35.2%)	124 (32.4%)	92 (20.3%)	68 (15.5%)	3.50	.614	Agree

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The result in Table 1 reflect the names of some women in Kano, Kaduna, Federal capital territory in north with the mean rating ranging from 3.34 to 3.72 while the standard deviation also ranges from .573 to .772. The highest mean of 3.72 shows that female seclusion is one of the political barriers. The mean 3.52 shows that, Low literacy rate among women, is one of the political barriers. The mean 3.50 shows that Lack of political

education is one of the political barriers. The mean 3.42 shows that Women lacking financial resources to fund campaign is one of the political barriers. The lowest mean of 3.34 indicates that Lack of female role model have not made women see the need to step out to participate in electoral process in Northern Nigeria.

The findings thereby revealed that Female seclusion with the highest value of mean is one of the common barriers identified in the northern region of Nigeria. Followed by Low literacy rate, Lack of female role model, Lack of financial resources to fund campaign and Fear of insecurity all these are the major barriers women encounter, during electoral processes in northern Nigeria.

Research question two: Do the women in Northern Nigerian experience the same challenges with the women in Southern Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation showing if Northern and Southern women experience the same challenges

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Northern and Southern women are subjected to political violence and intimidation	92 (17.7%)	188 (36.0%)	48 (9.2%)	72 (13.8%)	3.54	.579	Agree
2	Northern and Southern women are subjected to political violence and intimidation.	144 (24.0%)	156 (26.0%)	60 (10.0%)	40 (6.7%)	3.42	.575	Agree
3	Northern and Southern women are stereotyped in professional spaces	168 (28.6%)	122 (19.0%)	80 (14.3%)	40 (7.1%)	3.20	.535	Agree
4	Southern and Northern women are both restricted by religion	96 (20.7%)	124 (26.7%)	108 (23.3%)	72 (15.5%)	3.26	.565	Agree
5	Southern and Northern women are illiterate	132 (26.7%)	116 (23.4%)	64 (12.9%)	88 (18.0%)	3.12	.689	Agree

Cluster mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; ≤ 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

Results in Table 2 reflects the similarities and differences between Northern and Southern women when it comes to challenges encountered during electoral processes, with the mean value ranging from 3.12 to 3.54 while the standard deviation also ranges from .535 to .689. the mean of 3.54 shows that Northern and Southern women are subjected to political violence and intimidation. The mean of 3.42 shows Northern and Southern women are stereotyped in professional spaces. The mean of 3.26 shows that Northern and Southern women are both restricted by religion. The mean of 3.20

Northern and Southern women are both victims of regional insecurities. The lowest mean of 3.12 shows Northern and Southern women are illiterate.

The findings revealed that the similarities between the women in Northern Nigeria and the women in Southern Nigeria includes Northern and Southern women are subjected to political violence and intimidation, Southern and Northern women are stereotyped in professional spaces, Northern and Southern women are both victims of regional insecurities Northern and Southern women are both restricted by religion and also that Northern and Southern women are illiterate.

Research question three: How does cultural, social and economic factor limit women participation during electoral processes?

Table 3: mean and standard deviation showing how cultural, social and economic factor limit women participation during electoral processes

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	The system have are been structured to favour men	212 (50.2%)	120 (30.2%)	48 (11.3%)	20 (8.2%)	3.10	.789	Agree
2	Economic hardship, household responsibility limits the time women can dedicate to politics	144 (38.2%)	196 (38.6%)	40 (13.5%)	20 (9.7%)	3.10	.789	Agree
3	Early marriage does not allow women to develop themselves.	132 (37.8%)	156 (33.5%)	44 (11.7%)	68 (17.0%)	2.80	.948	Agree
4	Religious teachings are interpreted to limit women involvement in politics.	168 (48.9%)	184 (32.4%)	16 (12.1%)	32 (8.1%)	2.92	.886	Agree
5	Women are not free to attend social gathering	108 (35.2%)	140 (32.4%)	68 (20.3%)	84 (15.5%)	2.96	.832	Agree

Cluster mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; ≤ 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 3 shows, how cultural, social, and economic factor limit women participation during electoral processes with mean value ranging from 2.80 to 3.10 while the standard deviation also ranges from .789 to 948. The mean 3.10 indicates that The system have are been structured to favour men 3.10 shows Economic hardship, household responsibility limits the time women can dedicate to politics. The mean 2.96 indicates that Women are not free to attend social gathering. The mean 2.92 indicates that

Religious teachings are interpreted to limit women involvement in politics.. The lowest mean of 2.80 indicates that early marriage does not allow women to develop themselves.

Findings from the analysis revealed that cultural, social and economic factor has limited women in various ways which includes the fact that system favours men more than women, Economic hardship, household responsibility limits the time women can dedicate to politics, Early marriage does not allow women to develop themselves, Religious teachings are interpreted to limit women involvement in politics and also Women are not free to attend social gathering.

Research question four: To what extent do political parties and institutions support or hinder women participation in electoral process?

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation showing the extent political parties and institutions support or hinder women participation in electoral process

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Parties imposing exorbitant nomination fees, have restricted women from participating in politics	168 (47.2%)	124 (34.8%)	76 (13.1%)	28 (5.0%)	3.72	.573	Agree
2	Electoral institution has failed to protect women from harassment, intimidation, and violence during election.	124 (34.3%)	212 (47.1%)	44 (9.2%)	20 (6.7%)	3.52	.580	Agree
3	Political parties sometimes field female candidates to demonstrate inclusivity and attract female voters	108 (33.1%)	232 (52.6%)	24 (5.5%)	36 (8.8%)	3.34	.772	Agree
4	Institutions like INEC organize voters education campaign that encourage women to register and vote.	188 (50.2%)	120 (32.4%)	56 (12.1%)	36 (8.1%)	3.42	.642	Agree
5	The cost for women to participate in electoral process is less expensive	132 (35.2%)	124 (32.4%)	92 (20.3%)	68 (15.5%)	3.50	.614	Agree

Cluster mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; ≤ 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 4 reflects the extent in which political parties and institutions support or hinder women participation in electoral process , with a mean rating ranging from 3.34 to 3.72 while the standard deviation also ranges from 6.14 to 7.72. the mean 3.72 indicates that Parties imposing exorbitant nomination fees, have restricted women from participating in politics. The mean 3.52 indicates that electoral institution has failed to promote women from harassment ,and violence during

elections, 3.34 shows Political parties sometimes field female candidates to demonstrate inclusivity and attract female voters. The mean 3.46 indicates that Institutions like INEC organize voters education campaign that encourage women to register and vote. While 3.50 indicates that the cost for women to participate in electoral process is less expensive. The above findings revealed that political parties and institutions support women participation by sometimes fielding female candidates to demonstrate inclusivity and attract female voters, Institutions like INEC organize voters education campaign that encourages women to register and vote and also the cost for women to participate, in electoral process is less expensive.

The finding also revealed that political parties and institution hinders women participation in electoral process by imposing exorbitant nomination fees, which have restricted women from participating in politics, Electoral institution has failed to protect women from harassment, intimidation ,and violence during election.

Research question five: What strategies have been effective in promoting women’s participation in electoral processes in Nigeria?

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation showing the extent political parties and institutions support or hinder women participation in electoral process.

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Project to improve girls enrolment in schools have commenced	168 (47.2%)	124 (34.8%)	76 (13.1%)	28 (5.0%)	3.72	.573	Agree
2	Skills training and economic empowerment have been put in place to support women	124 (34.3%)	212 (47.1%)	44 (9.2%)	20 (6.7%)	3.52	.580	Agree
3	Working with traditional and religious leaders to change norms.	108 (33.1%)	232 (52.6%)	24 (5.5%)	36 (8.8%)	3.34	.772	Agree
4	Civil education campaign through radios, television and social media highlight the importance of women voters.	188 (50.2%)	120 (32.4%)	56 (12.1%)	36 (8.1%)	3.42	.642	Agree
5	Grass root mobilization have been used to mobilize women at the community level.	132 (35.2%)	124 (32.4%)	92 (20.3%)	68 (15.5%)	3.50	.614	Agree

Cluster mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; ≤ 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 5 reflects the strategies that have been effective in promoting women’s participation in electoral processes in Nigeria, with a mean rating ranging from 3.34 to 3.72 while the standard deviation also ranges from 6.14 to 7.72. The mean 3.72 indicates that Project to improve girls enrolment in schools have commenced. The mean, 3.52 shows that Skills training and economic empowerment have been put in place to support women. The mean 3.34 shows Working with traditional and religious leaders to

change norms.3.42 indicates that Civil education campaign through radios, television and social media highlight the importance of women voters .While 3.50 indicates that Grass root mobilization have been used to mobilize women at the community level.

The finding from the analysis shows the strategies that have been effective in promoting women's participation in electoral processes in northern Nigeria. Project to improve girls enrolment in schools have commenced. Skills training and economic empowerment have been put in place to support women. Working with traditional and religious leaders to change norms, Civil education campaign through radios, television and social media highlight the importance of women voters. Grass root mobilization have been used to mobilize women at the community level.

The finding from the analysis shows the strategies that have been effective in promoting women's participation in electoral processes in Nigeria they include Advocacy group have used court to fight against discrimination, International bodies like UN have supported Nigerian women with leadership training campaign, strategies and financial empowerment. Some parties have women wings that mobilize female voters, and encourages participation. Civil education campaign through radios, television and social media highlight the importance of women voters. The cost for women to participate in electoral process is less expensive.

Research question six: What policies and legislative reform can be implemented to increase the participation of women?

Table 6: Mean and standard deviation showing the policies and legislative reform that can be implemented to increase the participation of women.

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Free and compulsory girl child education.	168 (47.2%)	124 (34.8%)	76 (13.1%)	28 (5.0%)	3.72	.573	Agree
2	Create mentorship network pairing young women with experienced female leaders. .	124 (34.3%)	212 (47.1%)	44 (9.2%)	20 (6.7%)	3.52	.580	Agree
3	Each government unit should have a gender unit to monitor and promote inclusion	108 (33.1%)	232 (52.6%)	24 (5.5%)	36 (8.8%)	3.34	.772	Agree
4	Conduct awareness campaign against harmful norms that discourage participation.	188 (50.2%)	120 (32.4%)	56 (12.1%)	36 (8.1%)	3.42	.642	Agree
5	Support training and mentorship program to prepare women for political roles	132 (35.2%)	124 (32.4%)	92 (20.3%)	68 (15.5%)	3.50	.614	Agree

Cluster mean=3.50 Criterion mean ≥ 2.5 is accepted; ≤ 2.5 is rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The results in Table 6 reflects the policies and legislative reform that can be implemented to increase the participation of women with a mean rating ranging from 3.34 to 3.72 while the standard deviation also ranges from 6.14 to 7.72. The mean 3.72 shows that Free and compulsory girl child education.. The mean, 3.52 Create mentorship network pairing young women with experienced female leaders. The mean 3.34 Each government unit should have a gender unit to monitor and promote inclusion.3.42 show that Conduct

awareness campaign against harmful norms that discourage participation., 3.50 indicates that Support training and mentorship program to prepare women for political roles should be implemented.

The above findings revealed that implementing polices like Free and compulsory girl child education, Create mentorship network pairing young women with experienced female leaders , Each government unit should have a gender unit to monitor and promote inclusion, Conduct awareness campaign against harmful norms that discourage participation and also Support training and mentorship program to prepare women for political roles should be implemented to increase women participation during electoral process.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

So far, we have established that compared to their northern counterparts, southern women have more involvement in elective politics. We found the gender gap in voting in Southern and Northern Nigeria. This confirms a shockingly high in-country variation in gender gap, which deserves both further research and policy attention (Isaksson et al. 2014). Just as more women in the south did not voted, women in the north also did not get involved in electoral practices like attending campaign events and making claims on government, and marginally in working for candidates. Nonetheless, the findings reveal as well that Nigerian women are making modest progress, like most women across Africa, in terms of political representation (Townley 2019).

Our findings show that access to formal employment/career pathways is a positive predictor for voting for both northern and southern women, although southern women have more opportunities for employment, supported by increased access to formal education. Education attainment of itself, however, presents a more mixed picture. In our study it is shown as a negative predictor in both regions, with higher educated southern women less likely to vote in an election and higher educated northern women less likely to work for a candidate. Going by the findings, women's political participation in voting in Southern Nigeria is higher among the less educated (Datzberger and Le Mat 2019; Isaksson et al. 2014). The findings align with those found in India (Bhalotra et al. 2013) and southern Cameroon (Kinge and Adepoju 2014) where education attainment did not positively predict voting among women. Contrary to the findings of Dim and Asomah (2019), education attainment also does not facilitate claim-making on government as a form of civic participation among either northern or southern women. Then thus find limited basis for the optimism and the confidence with which existing studies prescribe education as a panacea for women's low political participation in Nigeria.

While existing studies in Nigeria (see for instance, Arowolo and Aluko 2010; Kelly 2019), Mexico (Trelles and Carreras 2012), and Bangladesh (Ley 2017; Paasilinna et al. 2017) have documented negative implications of violence for women's participation in voting and politics in general, our study presents a mix of positive and negative implications. In fact, in some cases, we, surprisingly, find that violence was empowering as opposed to disempowering for women's political participation. For example, fear of

violence at political events positively predicts attendance at campaign events for both Northern and Southern Nigerian women. It also positively predicts working for a candidate and making claims on government. Southern and Northern women would, in addition, brave fear of violence at political events to work for candidates and to make claims on government. These findings suggest that Nigerian women could be choosing to stand up to their fears and are willing to pay a price to increase their visibility in politics. It could be that the higher a woman's fear of violence and her perception of overall insecurity, the more likely that she will engage in seeking an alternative to the existing government by attending campaign events and working for political candidates considered as better options. Former Nigeria President Goodluck Jonathan was said to have lost his re-election bid in 2015 because of his government's inability to end the Boko Haram insurgency and rescue the abducted Chibok girls (Abutu and Samsu 2017; Siollun 2015).

Furthermore, fear of domestic violence discourages voting but encourages making claims on government among southern women and Northern women . Since movement is usually restricted on election day in Nigeria, being at home with abusive husbands may greatly restrict women's freedom and prevent them from going to the polls. Nevertheless, it is common in Nigeria for women in abusive relationships to contact government officials for help. In addition, fear of violence during public protest significantly predicts claim-making on government among women in Southern and Northern Nigeria. The contemporary example of the women-led group Bring Back Our Girls which engaged in

sustained protests for several years to demand the rescue of the Chibok schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram terrorists, and for the improvement of security for girls and women sheds light on this (Ojebode and Oladapo 2018). These are cases where different forms of fear of violence were found empowering rather than disempowering for women.

Religion seems to partially influence Nigerian women's political participation as suggested in some literature (Dim and Asomah 2019). But this is mainly as it relates to claim-making on government. In this respect, we found Christian religious affiliation to be strongly, significantly associated with claim-making only for northern women. The religious nature of Nigerian politics sheds some light on why a Christian religious affiliation is a significant predictor of making claims on government in the predominantly Muslim Northern Nigeria (Aghedo and Surulola 2013; Bamidele 2018). Northern Christians often feel marginalised because most prominent political office holders in the region are Muslim. The practice of the Sharia Islamic law in some northern states also intensifies northern Christians' claim of marginalisation. Given this situation, it is reasonable to expect that northern Christians who are least represented in politics make claims on government to make up for the lack of adequate representation.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter focuses on summary, conclusion and recommendations.

5.1 Summary

This study determined the barrier to women participation in Electoral processes in Nigeria: A comparative study of Southern and Northern Nigeria. six research questions were raised to guide the study.

Chapter two reviewed the related literature on the barrier to women participation in Electoral processes in Nigeria . The chapter discussed the following subheadings such as do the women in Southern Nigeria share the same challenges with the women in Northern Nigeria, how do cultural ,social, and economic factors limits women participation, what strategies have been effective in promoting women participation in electoral processes in Nigeria and also what policy and legislative reform can be implemented to increase the participation of women.

The study adopted the survey research design. The design was adopted because it is interested in the accurate assessment of the characteristics of the whole population through the study of a sample considered to be the representative of the population. The base population is 1,495,800 according to housing census 2006; and according to demographic projection in 2024 was 1,757,000. In this research, the population consists of women in Edo, Delta, Lagos,

Kano, Kaduna, Federal Capital territory who are have come of age to vote, irrespective of their gender, social economic status, religious affiliation and ethnic affiliation. In this study, a non-probability sampling procedure Since it was a public opinion survey, respondents were selected as they were available until the 390th respondent was selected for the study. This was necessary because of the unavailability of sampling frame. The instrument for this research was a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The instrument was titled "Barrier to women participation in electoral processes. The instrument consisted of two parts A and B. To ensure content validity of this instrument, the researcher's supervisor and two experts in the Department of political Science in Faculty of Social Science, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State will validate the instrument. The experts carefully examine the relevance of the instrument in order to ensure that the instruments measure what it is intended to measure and to ascertain the appropriateness of the instrument.

In order to ensure the reliability of the instrument, the test split half reliability method was adopted. A pretest of the questionnaire was conducted using respondents outside the target population. Twenty (20) parents outside the sample size will be administered the questionnaire twice within a period of two weeks. The scores obtained from both exercise was correlated using the Cronbach's Alpha statistics tool which was 0.641.

The data collected was analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (SD). The findings generally showed Support from political parties, civil society, and educational levels

have significant impact on women participation in Electoral participation in Nigeria both in the Southern and Northern region. The major findings of the study were as follows:

Despite the regional differences between the women in the south and women in the north, they both share several common challenges which includes:

5.2 GENERAL FINDINGS

1. Patriarchal Attitudes and Gender Stereotypes

Across both regions, society largely perceives politics as a male-dominated arena. Women who aspire to political leadership are often discouraged or criticized for stepping beyond traditional gender roles. Both northern and southern communities tend to associate women with domestic duties, which restricts their acceptance as leaders or decision-makers.

2. Political Party Discrimination

In both regions, political parties remain male-controlled institutions. Women's involvement is often confined to ceremonial or supportive roles, such as mobilizing voters or organizing rallies, while real decision-making is left to men. Party primaries are frequently manipulated to favor male candidates, discouraging women from contesting or staying active.

3. Weak Implementation of Gender Policies

While Nigeria has adopted gender equality policies such as the National Gender Policy (2006) and ratified international frameworks like CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All

Forms of Discrimination Against Women), implementation remains poor nationwide. Both northern and southern women experience minimal government commitment to enforcing gender quotas or providing institutional support.

4. Security Challenges

Both regions are faced with insecurity, this have contributed to their un involvement in political activities as Political gatherings and campaigns are often unsafe, discouraging women from attending rallies or voting. In some cases, extremist groups openly threaten or target women who attempt to participate in politics, viewing them as violating religious norms.

FINDINGS PECULIAR TO SOUTHERN WOMEN

While women in both regions of Nigeria face gender-based exclusion, women in Southern Nigeria encounter a distinct set of barriers influenced by the region's socioeconomic dynamics, political environment, and institutional structures. These barriers differ from those in the North, where religious and cultural restrictions dominate.

1. Political Party Structure and Internal Discrimination

Political parties in the South often operate through patronage networks controlled by influential male politicians. Women are rarely given access to key party positions or nomination tickets. Even though most parties have “women wings,” these divisions have little power in shaping policies or selecting candidates.

As a result, many women are relegated to supportive or mobilization roles during campaigns rather than decision-making positions.

This exclusion within party structures makes it difficult for women to emerge as candidates, even in states with high literacy and urbanization levels.

2. Media Representation and Public Visibility

Another challenge unique to Southern Nigeria is biased media coverage. The media in the South—especially in urban centers like Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Enugu—often portrays female politicians through gendered lenses, focusing on their appearance or personal lives rather than their policies or competence.

This biased representation trivializes women’s contributions and affects their public credibility during elections

3.Lack of Institutional Support

Although Southern Nigeria has more NGOs and advocacy groups promoting gender equality, institutional support remains weak. There is limited enforcement of gender quotas or affirmative action policies at the state and local government levels.

FINDINGS PECULIAR TO NORTHERN WOMEN

While women across Nigeria face gender-based discrimination, those in Northern Nigeria encounter unique and more entrenched barriers rooted in religion, culture, education, and

security conditions. These barriers create a distinct form of political exclusion that sets the North apart from the South.

1. Religious and Cultural Restrictions

One of the most significant barriers to women's participation in Northern Nigeria is the strong influence of religion and culture. The predominance of Islamic traditions and the practice of *purdah* (female seclusion) restrict women's mobility and visibility in public life.

Many religious and community leaders interpret religious doctrines in ways that discourage women from participating in politics, arguing that leadership is primarily a male role.

This cultural conservatism creates social pressure on women to remain silent and submissive, effectively excluding them from political discussions, rallies, or contests.

2. Low Educational Attainment

Education plays a vital role in political awareness and empowerment, but women in Northern Nigeria generally have lower literacy and school enrollment rates compared to those in the South.

Due to early marriage, poverty, and traditional beliefs, many girls drop out of school at a young age. This limits their exposure to civic education and reduces their confidence in participating in political affairs.

Low educational levels also mean that many women are not aware of their political rights or the importance of their votes, leading to high levels of voter apathy among women in the region.

3. Early and Forced Marriages

Early marriage is a widespread practice in Northern Nigeria and directly affects women's political participation. Many girls are married off in their teens, often to much older men, which limits their independence and access to education or public engagement.

Once married, women are expected to prioritize family responsibilities and obey their husbands, leaving little room for political ambitions.

This practice reinforces women's dependency on men and limits their involvement in political processes at both community and national levels.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The multifaceted challenges hindering Southern and Northern women's participation in Nigerian politics are deeply rooted in societal norms, cultural practices, and economic disparities. Deep-seated cultural barriers, often reinforced by religious beliefs, perpetuate traditional gender roles that confine women to domestic spheres. These cultural constraints, coupled with discriminatory practices, violence, and economic inequalities, create a hostile environment for women aspiring to political positions or those intending to vote. While significant progress has been made in recent years, with the number of

female appointees and voters in various states, addressing these entrenched barriers remains crucial for achieving true gender equality and ensuring that women have an equal voice in the political landscape of Nigeria as a whole.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made

Policy Initiatives: Advocate for legislative reforms that mandate gender quotas and ensure equitable representation in political structures. There is a need to strengthen existing legal and policy frameworks to support gender equality in politics. Laws and policies that protect women’s political rights should be fully implemented, while new ones should be enacted to criminalize gender-based discrimination and electoral violence against women. The effective enforcement of these laws will create a more enabling environment for women to participate freely and safely in the electoral process.

Conduct Awareness Campaign

Traditional and religious leaders should be engaged in advocacy campaigns to reinterpret cultural and religious doctrines that discourage women from leadership. Public enlightenment programs should emphasize that women’s involvement in politics is not contrary to moral or religious values but rather contributes positively to community development.

Implement Gender Quota

Another important recommendation is the enforcement of gender quotas and affirmative action in political institutions. The 35% affirmative action policy contained in Nigeria's National Gender Policy should be made legally binding across all political structures. Political parties should be mandated to allocate a certain percentage of nomination slots to women during elections. Monitoring bodies such as INEC and the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs should ensure strict compliance and sanction political parties that fail to meet the set standard.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES: Prioritise women's political literacy and leadership training to enhance their active participation.

Economic Empowerment: Develop strategies to improve women's access to resources, financial independence, and economic opportunities. **Cultural Reorientation:** Launch campaigns to challenge traditional norms, dismantle stereotypes, and promote gender equality in society.

APPENDIX
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY

QUESTIONNAIRE ON
BARRIER TO WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN
NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOUTHERN NIGERIA AND
NORTHERN NIGERIA.

Dear Respondent,

Request to fill Questionnaire

I am an undergraduate student of the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Science, University of Benin, Benin City in Edo State. I am presently carrying out a research study titled ‘**BARRIER TO WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN NIGERIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOUTHERN NIGERIA AND NORTHERN NIGERIA**’ Kindly help to complete the questionnaire as your frank response will help this research . It is purely for academic purpose and the information you provide will be treated as confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this research.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours, faithfully

Osifo Prisca

Please, kindly respond to the items below by ticking () that which you agree with.

SECTION A: Demographic characteristic of participants

1. Sex: Male [], Female []

SECTION B:

KEYS

SA= Strongly Agree

A= Agree

D= Disagree

SD= Strongly Disagree

EXCLUSIVE TO WOMEN IN THE SOUTH

	What are the major barrier women in the south encounter during electoral processes	SA	A	D	S
1	Traditional belief causes women political barriers				
2	Low literacy rate among women, limits women political awareness.				
3	Lack of political education leads to women political barriers				
4	Women lack financial resources to fund campaign				

5	Political parties, prioritizing men over women in leadership position leads to women political barrier				
2	Do the women in Southern Nigerian experience the same challenges with the women in Northern Nigeria				
1	Southern and Northern women are subjected to political violence and intimidation.				
2	Southern and Northern women are stereotyped in professional spaces.				
3	Southern and Northern women are both victims of regional insecurities				
4	Southern and Northern women are both restricted by religion.				
5	Southern and Northern women are illiterate				
3	How does cultural, social and economic factor limit women participation during electoral processes				
1	Women who are politically active, are known to be wayward, rebellious and bad wives.				
2	Economic hardship, household responsibility limits the time women can dedicate to politics				
3	Lower literacy rate reduce women awareness of voting and political participation				
4	Religious teachings are interpreted to limit women involvement in politics.				
5	Women are not free to attend social gathering				
4	To what extent do political parties and institutions support or hinder women participation in electoral process				
1	Parties imposed exorbitant nomination fees, have restricted women from participating in politics				

2	Electoral institution has failed to protect women from harassment, intimidation and violence during election.				
3	Political parties sometimes field female candidates to demonstrate inclusivity and attract female voters.				
4	Institutions like INEC organize voters education campaign that encourage women to register and vote.				
5	The cost for women to participate in electoral process is less expensive				
5	What strategies have been effective in promoting women's participation in electoral processes in Nigeria				
1	Advocacy group have used court to fight against discrimination				
2	International bodies like UN have supported Nigerian women with leadership training campaign, strategies and financial empowerment.				
3	Most parties have women wings that mobilize female voters and encourages participation				
4	Civil education campaign through radios, television and social media highlight the importance of women voters.				
5	Grass root mobilization have been used to mobilize women at the community level.				
6	What policies and legislative reform can be implemented to increase the participation of women				
1	Subsidized or free nomination form for female candidates should be implemented.				
2	Create laws that criminalized gender based political violence, harassment and intimidation.				

3	Support training and mentorship program to prepare women for political roles				
4	Establish special campaign funds, or grants for women provided by government, electoral bodies or donor.				
5	Support training and mentorship program to prepare women for political roles				

Please, kindly respond to the items below by ticking (✓) that which you agree with.

SECTION A: Demographic characteristic of participants

1. Sex: Male [], Female []

SECTION B:

KEYS

SA= Strongly Agree

A= Agree

D= Disagree

SD= Strongly Disagree

EXCLUSIVE TO WOMEN IN THE NORTH

S/N	What are the major barrier women in the north encounter during electoral processes	SA	A	D	SD
1	Female seclusion have restricted women from participating in political activities.				
2	Low literacy rate among women, limits women political awareness.				
3	Lack of female role model have not made women see the need to step out				
4	Women lack financial resources to fund campaign				
5	Fear of insecurity have keep women far from political activities.				

2	Do the women in Northern Nigerian experience the same challenges with the women in Southern Nigeria				
1	Northern and Southern women are subjected to political violence and intimidation.				
2	Northern and Southern women are stereotyped in professional spaces.				
3	Northern and Southern women are both victims of regional insecurities				
4	Northern and Southern women are both restricted by religion.				
5	Northern and Southern women are illiterate				
3	How does cultural, social and economic factor limit women participation during electoral processes				
1	The system have are been structured to favour men				
2	Economic hardship, household responsibility limits the time women can dedicate to politics				
3	Early marriage does not allow women to develop themselves.				
4	Religious teachings are interpreted to limit women involvement in politics.				
5	Women are not free to attend social gathering				
4	To what extent do political parties and institutions support or hinder women participation in electoral process				
1	Parties imposed exorbitant nomination fees, have restricted women from participating in politics				
2	Electoral institution has failed to protect women from harassment, intimidation and violence during election.				

3	Political parties sometimes field female candidates to demonstrate inclusivity and attract female voters.				
4	Institutions like INEC organize voters education campaign that encourage women to register and vote.				
5	The cost for women to participate in electoral process is less expensive				
5	What strategies have been effective in promoting women's participation in electoral processes in Nigeria				
1	Project to improve girls enrolment in schools have commenced				
2	Skills training and economic empowerment have been put in place to support women				
3	Working with traditional and religious leaders to change norms.				
4	Civil education campaign through radios, television and social media highlight the importance of women voters.				
5	Grass root mobilization have been used to mobilize women at the community level.				
6	What policies and legislative reform can be implemented to increase the participation of women				
1	Free and compulsory girl child education.				
2	Create mentorship network pairing young women with experienced female leaders. .				
3	Each government unit should have a gender unit to monitor and promote inclusion				

4	Conduct awareness campaign against harmful norms that discourage participation.				
5	Support training and mentorship program to prepare women for political roles				